



### **December Beautification Winner Mike Koning**

The December, 2008 Beautification Winner is Mike Koning, Graffiti Remover Extraordinaire! Mike, a retired Eli Lilly employee, began his career as a graffiti remover for the City of Lafayette in 2007. It was there that he worked with John Dennis, and when it became apparent that West Lafayette needed help with this problem, Mayor Dennis knew who to call. This dedicated volunteer has managed to remove 170 tags in the Village area alone, with some repeat work to clean up new tags. He praises the cooperative working relationship between the two mayors that allow him to work on both sides of the river. He also has developed a relationship with his counterparts at Purdue University and has learned a lot from them. This is a very low budget operation, with much of his paint coming from the Wild Cat Solid Waste District. Mike feels strongly that graffiti needs to be removed as quickly as it is applied, so works with property owners to get it off buildings, dumpsters and fences right away, instead of waiting for the 14-day period that property owners are given under city ordinance. He works year round to beautify West Lafayette, even removing paint one winter day when the temperature was 16 degrees. Most beautification winners are recognized for what they have added to our community, but this award is given to the person who has taken away. Thank you, Mike Koning!

The Indiana Association of Chiefs of Police awarded Michael Koning their 2008 Community Service Award for his graffiti eradication efforts in West Lafayette. The award was presented to Mr. Koning at a banquet at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Indianapolis in January 2009.